



Aquatics Program Parent Handbook



Welcome

Thank you for choosing the YWCA Aquatics Program. We hope that your child/ren enjoy what our staff have planned for you. We are proud to offer the Canadian Red Cross Aqua Quest Program and Lifesaving Society Bronze Program. It is our intent to ensure that your child is receiving the best quality swimming lessons and that all swimmers are “water safe”. Your input is important to us, please feel free to speak with the Aquatics Coordinator at the pool or contact the Manager of Community Programming at (519)631-9800.

The YWCA Mandate

The YWCA of St. Thomas is a registered, charitable, voluntary organization whose mission is to empower women and children by providing quality, caring, innovative services.

Aquatics Program Mandate

Our Red Cross Swim Program offers qualified leadership in providing high quality swim programs for the Town of Aylmer and surrounding communities. The program is designed with flexibility in order to respond to and complement each child’s skills and abilities.

Qualified Red Cross swim instructors and leaders teach a variety of swimming levels to meet the needs of children ages 3 months and up.

We have built a strong partnership with Terrace Lodge, Ontario Police College and the Town of Aylmer all located in the Aylmer area. These agencies have enabled us to build and sustain a strong swim program in the Aylmer Community.

The YWCA Swim Program Policy and Procedures are based upon legislative requirements for the operation of aquatics programming in the province of Ontario, the requirements of the YWCA St. Thomas-Elgin, Canadian Red Cross, Life Saving Society, and Public Health. They have been established to ensure a standard of programming for the safety and well being of children. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in suspension of program operation or dismissal of staff.

The provision of programs & activities that promote and support the healthy development of children is valued. All children's programs are planned and implemented in ways that support and reflect desired outcomes for children in recreation and sport.

Quality Assurance

The YWCA follows policies that are designed to support the safety, well being and healthy development of children in recreation programs. Through this approach we are committed to developing and maintaining a high level of knowledge and expertise in child development. All swim staff are trained in the High Five Principles of Healthy Childhood Development.

Facilities

The YWCA is very grateful for the use of the Ontario Police College, Terrace Lodge and Outdoor Town of Aylmer pools. Please remember:

- Staff parking lots are off limits
- Have your children with you at all times when they are not in the pool.
- Please do not let your children run around the facilities
- Respect the facilities and leave them in the same condition as when you arrive
- We sometimes receive last minute notification of pool/facility closures - we ask for your patience as we contact families and reschedule classes

Registration & Withdrawals

Families are welcome to register during one of our registration events or through the Aylmer Community Services Office or YWCA St. Thomas-Elgin. Registration forms must be complete with payment to be considered registered for the aquatics program. All swimming lessons are non-refundable after the session begins. Prorated fees will not be given for children starting late in the session. Refunds will be provided when a Doctor's note is submitted minus classes attended and a \$10 administration fee.

About our Staff

The YWCA is very fortunate to have highly experienced and qualified staff working in our aquatics program. All instructors are fully certified to teach Red Cross Swimming Lessons and are certified Lifeguards. Our staff participate in regular in-service training sessions to continuously improve and develop their skills. Staff demonstrate their ability to interact positively with children and are monitored on an ongoing basis and formally evaluated at least once a year.

Volunteer Involvement

The YWCA has created a Leader in Training program for any person interested in volunteering with the swim program. Volunteers complete an LIT contract and information sheet. If the LIT is 18+ a police records check is required prior to placement. If the LIT has first aid and CPR certification or High Five PHCD then certification is submitted for their file. LITs receive ongoing coaching, mentoring and assessment during their placement.

Parent and Child Feedback

Parent feedback is encouraged. Parents are invited to give written feedback on their child's experience and their level of satisfaction with the YWCA's swim program at least once per session. In addition to written feedback parents/guardians are welcome to speak with the Aquatics Coordinator.

Sharing Experiences with Parents about Children

Staff share information regarding each child's experience, development and overall participation in the program at least once per session with parents/guardians. If you would like more feedback please contact the Aquatics Coordinator for follow up.

Greetings and Departures

Instructors will set up a greeting area for all children to come to upon arrival. Class attendance is taken within the first few minutes of the program. Parents/guardians must accompany children upon arrival and pick up. Children age 13+ may come and leave the program without a parent/guardian.

Bullying Prevention & Intervention

All staff and volunteers who are in contact with children will maintain zero tolerance for bullying. Staff and volunteers will intervene immediately if such behaviour occurs. In addition, bullying and abusive behaviour will not be tolerated. Visitors/spectators will be asked to leave the program property if their behaviour is aggressive or abusive. Leaders strive to create a culture of respect and inclusion with practices to deal with any racism, bullying, violent behaviour, sexual harassment and disrespectful behaviour between children.

Allergy Awareness

All aquatics program locations are nut free zones. Children with allergies and anaphylactic allergies are identified at registration. Children with an anaphylactic allergy will also have an "individual plan for anaphylactic allergy" form completed. All allergies will be posted and staff will be notified prior to program start.

Continuous Evaluation

In the past, our swimmers experienced a "test day" or "exam". Rather than having each swimmer evaluated on one day, the Aqua Quest Program has been designed to evaluate swimmers continuously. This ensures that children have mastered the requirements prior to moving on to the next level. Instructors are required to observe a task three times for it be considered complete. Once all requirements are complete the swimmer can proceed to the next level.

Passing or Getting a Badge

It is our responsibility to ensure that each child has successfully completed all requirements before progressing to the next level. We realize that children may become discouraged if they do not receive a badge. In order for all children to

progress and develop their skills we must ensure that all requirements are completed for the level before a swimmer progresses to the next level.

Lesson Plans

Swim instructors develop lesson plans that are reviewed and approved by the aquatics coordinator prior to being implemented. The implementation of these lessons is monitored during program session by the coordinator to ensure ongoing quality program delivery. Lesson plans follow the Canadian Red Cross and reflect a progressive skill development process.

Commonly Asked Questions

- My child has been in Level 3 for three sessions! Is this normal?
It is important to realize that children progress at different rates depending on their age, body type and body size. It is not uncommon to repeat a level more than once.

- My child did not complete the level and I have already registered them for the next level up. What should I do?
Speak to the instructor or Aquatics Coordinator the first day and let them know what items need to be completed from the previous level. If the items missed are safety skills your child will be moved to the lower class. If it is not a safety skill (ie. Front dive) then moving to the next level is a possibility.

- How do you plan level times?
We plan our class schedule very carefully, considering, age, level, and demand. The lower level classes are offered most often, as there is greater demand for them. All scheduled classes will be filled before we offer a new class. Classes may be cancelled due to low enrolment.

Shallow Water Skills

The old philosophy of throwing someone in the deep end so they learn to swim does not promote the water safety message we support and can be a very scary experience for a swimmer. Swimmers master skills in the shallow water and then are moved to the deep water to perform the same skills. It is important that swimmers are comfortable performing skills in shallow water before they perform them in the deep end.

YWCA Office at Aylmer Community Services (519)765-2082
25 Centre Street, Aylmer
Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri 9am to 4:30pm, Tuesdays 9am to 6pm